

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3564

INFO USUN 2036

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

CINCPAC HONOLULU HAWAII

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 13543

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UNGA, KS, KN, JA

SUBJ: JAPANESE REACTION TO SECRETARY'S PROPOSAL FOR KOREA CONFERENCE

SUMMARY: THOUGH JAPANESE LIKE SECRETARY'S INITIATIVE ON
KOREA, THEY DOUBT PYONGYANG WILL GO ALONG. END SUMMARY.

1. FOLLOWING MAIN POINTS HAVE EMERGED IN JAPANESE PRESS
AND FONOFF ANALYSIS OF SECRETARY'S PROPOSAL FOR CONVENING
OF CONFERENCE ON WAYS TO PRESERVE ARMISTICE, REDUCE TENSION
ON KOREAN PENINSULA:

A. IT IS GENERALLY IN ACCORD WITH JAPANESE THINKING,
I.E., THAT SETTLEMENT CAN RESULT ONLY THROUGH TALKS AMONG
"THE PARTIES CONCERNED", (AND, NOTE FONOFF CONTACTS, IT
IS MUCH THE SORT OF THING THEY HAVE URGED ON US). THUS
JAPANESE WARMLY WELCOME US INITIATIVE.

B. PROPOSAL IS A USEFUL AND EFFECTIVE "PROP" TO US-JAPAN
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CAMPAIGN ON BEHALF OF FRIENDLY KOREA RESOLUTION AND AGAINST
HOSTILE ONE.

C. IT IS NOT VERY LIKELY THAT DPRK WILL AGREE TO CONFERENCE.

DIRGEN KAGAMI OF MOFA PLANNING AND ANALYSIS DEPARTMENT COMMENTED TO EMBOFF THAT WE MUST PLAY OUR CARDS CAREFULLY LEST THEY DO AGREE, AND THEN ATTEMPT TO USE CONFERENCE SIMPLY AS A PROPAGANDA FORUM. MEANWHILE, ASAHI AND NIHON KEIJAI REPORT "SENIOR FONOFF OFFICIAL" AS IMPLYING THAT IS U.S. IS SERIOUS ABOUT GETTING DPRK TO CONFERENCE TABLE, DIRECT, SECRET CONTACTS WITH PYONGYANG ARE A NECESSARY PRELUDE. NIHON KEIZAI QUOTES HIM FURTHER AS DISCOUNTING IDEA THAT US ALREADY IN TOUCH WITH NORTH KOREANS.

D. SINCE MILITARY GUARANTEES BY JAPAN ARE OUT OF THE QUESTION, SAME "SENIOR FONOFF OFFICIAL" REPORTEDLY TOLD PRESS, GOJ MUST STUDY CAREFULLY WHAT ROLE IT MIGHT PLAY IN "LARGER CONFERENCE".

2. FOUR OF SIX MAJOR TOKYO DAILIES HAVE THUS FAR EDITORIALIZED ON PROPOSAL, ALL FAVORABLY. PRESS REGARDS IT AS TIMELY, FLEXIBLE AND SHOWING SINCERE U.S. DESIRE TO "IMPROVE" RELATIONS WITH NORTH KOREA WHILE MAINTAINING STABLE BALANCE ON KOREAN PENINSULA. MEDIA HAVE NOTED THAT PROPOSAL POSES PROBLEMS FOR PYONGYANG, PEKING AND MOSCOW. WHILE HOPEFUL THAT DPRK WILL RESPOND POSITIVELY, THEY TEND TO BELIEVE THAT PYONGYANG WILL GAG ON NOTION OF DEALING WITH ROK AS PARTY TO ARMISTICE. PRC AND USSR ARE THOUGH DISCOMFITED BY NOTION OF SITTING ON SAME SIDE OF CONFERENCE TABLE. ASAHI DAILY NEWS, IN OP ED-TYPE ANALYSIS, NOTES THAT FONMIN DID NOT REFER TO SECRETARY'S PROPOSAL IN HIS OWN UNGA SPEECH LATER SAME DAY, AND CONSIDERS THIS EVIDENCE THAT FONOFF HAVING TROUBLE FOLLOWING ZIGS AND ZAGS OF U.S. POLICY. A MORE PLAUSIBLE EXPLANATION IS THAT FONMIN COULD NOT ALTER SPEECH WITHOUT CABINET APPROVAL.
HODGSON

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